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file : Refugees  
Iraq

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT  
THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: Meeting w/ the House Leadership Codel (Turkey/Refugees)  
Tuesday April 23, 2:30 p.m.

This afternoon I met with the bipartisan Congressional delegation appointed by Speaker Foley to assess the Iraqi refugee crisis and report back to the Congress for action. Present were Congressmen Matt McHugh (D-NY), Ranking Democrat-Subcommittee on Foreign Ops, Howard Berman (D-CA), Chairman Subcommittee on International Ops, Chris Smith (R-NJ) of HFAC, and Marge Roukema (R-NJ) of Select Committee on Hunger. Tony Hall (D-OH), Chairman of House Select Committee on Hunger was absent.

Attached is their report to the Speaker. Some comments of particular interest from the meeting:

All were supportive of our efforts to date. "The President did exactly the right thing in using the military" (McHugh). Agreed that it was clear no one else (UN or PVO's) could move quickly enough to alleviate immediate problem.

They identified three key policy questions of particular concern: 1) Once we get them off the mountains, how do we get them to leave the camps and go home? 2) How do we facilitate and encourage takeover of effort by humanitarian groups? 3) How do we satisfy refugee concerns about security?

"Who will provide security guarantees if not us? We believe, from our meetings, the UN will not be anxious to fill this role" (McHugh). They repeated that Prince Sadruddin suggested to them that he would need 'a nod' from the Iraqis to operate humanitarian camps in the North and would need further Security Council action before a UN peacekeeping force could take on a security role.

I noted that these questions and problems were being considered at the highest levels of the Administration, but we could not wait to address the refugee problem while we formulating answers to these concerns. The Codel concurred.

- 2 -

I further noted that we are working to get the UN more engaged on all these issues. Whether the question is US troops, UN involvement, or the political future of the Kurdish refugees, there are not immediate obvious answers to many of these questions.

Some specific logistical questions were raised that should probably be taken up by the Deputies Committee.

The Codel was told there is some US law that prevents Americans from working for PVO's in Iraq. These citizens may need waivers.

The Codel heard requests for aerial spraying of the wheat crops, so as not to loose any more potential food supply.

Roukema encouraged us to divert resources available under PL 480 to get badly needed bulk commodities to the refugees. Also noted that they need premixed baby formula, since there is no reliable water supply.

They suggested that the Administration consider appointing a high-level coordinator for the Iraqi refugee issue. Suggested that perhaps the Administration's slowness in submitting a supplemental indicated that we need one person to pull all these issues together.

Lastly, they asked about timing and size of a supplemental. The entire delegation endorsed the idea of quick Administration action on a supplemental. They understand our desire to "flesh out the number" but made the point that this issue is a 'moving target' and that we would need at least one supplemental.

I assured them we were close to decision on the size and scope of a supplemental. I indicated that the HFAC proposal (\$400 m) was too large. I further stated that we want to ask for what we need, and what we can justify, without any attempt to abuse the supplemental and replenish accounts unnecessarily.

The group has reported back to Foley, has reported to the House Foreign Affairs and Appropriations Committees. They will wait 'a day or two' before moving a supplemental if a request is imminent from the Administration.

  
Lawrence S. Eagleburger 

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Lawrence S. Eagleburger 

• MATTHEW F. McHUGH  
28TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES  
FOREIGN OPERATIONS

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON INTELLIGENCE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN,  
YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 1991

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CARRIAGE HOUSE TERRACE HILL  
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231 WALL STREET  
KINGSTON, NY 12401  
(914) 331-4486

Honorable Thomas S. Foley  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The delegation you appointed to personally assess the Iraqi refugee crisis visited the area between April 17 and 22, 1991. I very much appreciate the opportunity you afforded me to serve as Chairman of the delegation, and I am attaching a report of our findings and conclusions. They have been unanimously agreed to.

As you indicated when appointing us, this situation represents a grave threat to many innocent civilians. As many as two million refugees and displaced persons may be at risk. Not only are the numbers large, but they came together in a matter of days, overwhelming the capacity of neighboring governments and relief agencies to effectively respond. For this reason, and given the unusually rugged and remote areas in which many of the refugees are located along the Iraqi-Turkish border, we support the President's decision to employ the U.S. military on an interim basis to help deliver emergency aid. If this were not done, many more refugees would die. Our military forces are doing an exceptional job, but their responsibilities in this respect should be assumed by traditional relief agencies as soon as practicable.

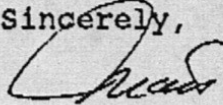
The costs associated with the relief and repatriation efforts are uncertain at this time, but they will be significant. To date, the United States has expended approximately \$132 million in providing emergency relief along the Turkish border. In addition, international organizations have issued appeals for \$722 million to deal with displaced persons within Iraq and refugees in all the border areas. These costs and projections are likely to increase.

It is clear to the delegation that the Administration must submit a supplemental appropriation request. It should do so expeditiously, after which it should be promptly considered by the Congress.

- 2 -

I sincerely thank you for your genuine concern, and the delegation stands ready to help you and the bipartisan House leadership in facilitating the response of our government to this crisis.

Sincerely,



Matthew F. McHugh  
Chairman of Delegation

April 23, 1991

HOUSE LEADERSHIP CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

TO ASSESS IRAQI REFUGEE CRISIS

APRIL 18-22, 1991

During the period of April 18-22, 1991 a House Congressional delegation led by Representative Matthew F. McHugh, traveled to Turkey to assess the Iraqi refugee crisis and the efforts being undertaken to meet that crisis. The delegation also included Representatives Tony P. Hall, Howard L. Berman, Marge Roukema and Christopher H. Smith.

The delegation visited the major border area refugee camp at Cukurca, flew over several other mainly inaccessible refugee areas, and reviewed each of the major United States emergency supply staging areas in Turkey. The delegation met with a number of key officials, including the President of Turkey, Lt General John M. Shalikashvili and other U. S. military commanders, Turkish officials, the U. S. Ambassador to Turkey, and various United Nations officials, including Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. The delegation talked to Iraqi refugees and also to military personnel involved in the emergency supply efforts.

FINDINGS

1. As a direct result of military conflict between Iraqi and Kurdish rebels, as many as two million Kurdish and other Iraqi civilians have fled from the Iraqi military to border areas and into neighboring countries. Although no accurate census has yet been possible, current estimates are that over 900,000 refugees are now in Iran, with hundreds of thousands more heading for the Iran-Iraqi border. In the Turkish-Iraqi border areas there are between 360,000 and 760,000 refugees (including displaced persons). There are smaller concentrations elsewhere.

2. This enormous build-up of refugees began on about March 31st and accelerated very quickly, overwhelming the capacity of neighboring governments and relief agencies to effectively respond. United Nations and other knowledgeable officials reported that at no time in their memory had such a large concentration of refugees massed so quickly. In the Turkish-Iraqi border areas, which the delegation visited and observed from the air, the delivery of humanitarian relief is seriously hampered by rugged mountainous terrain. Large numbers of refugees are massed on high mountain peaks which in many cases are inaccessible except by foot. The delegation was unable to visit the Iran-Iraq border areas and subsequent findings relate to the Turkish border areas.

3. Doctors who have gained access to some of the Turkish border areas have estimated that between 400 and 1000 refugees are dying each day. UN officials said the mortality rate was "extensive" from exposure, malnutrition, intestinal and respiratory infections. There is a dire need for potable water, food, tents, blankets, medicine and medical care. The delegation cannot certify the number of deaths, but it did observe dead bodies during its visit to the Cukurca area where 70,000 to 90,000 refugees are gathered.

4. Under the foregoing circumstances, only the United States military, supported by the armed forces of other nations (including Great Britain, France, Italy and Canada), has the capacity to provide emergency humanitarian aid to refugees in the Turkish border areas. Air drops and helicopter deliveries are in many cases the only way of reaching the refugees, and even then the deliveries are often inadequate and dangerous to accomplish. U. S. forces, including special forces and medical teams, are now being inserted on the ground in some locations to improve the efficiency of humanitarian supplies and services and this effort will be expanded.

5. The Turkish government and people have provided significant emergency aid to the refugees in the border areas. However, for historic and other reasons Turkey is unable or unwilling to absorb many Iraqi refugees. While Turkey has established a camp at Silopi which may temporarily take up to 40,000 refugees (there are about 15,000 there now), the Turkish government believes the refugees must be repatriated to and in Iraq.

6. Experts agree that, for health and safety reasons, the refugees must shortly be moved off the mountains to temporary camps on lower ground. The hope is that they can ultimately return to their homes in Iraq. However, the refugees will not move off the mountains or return home without credible assurances that their security will be protected.

7. Under the circumstances, the United States and its coalition partners have established the following three-phase plan to care for the refugees: (1) The military will assume primary responsibility for providing emergency relief in the mountains to mitigate the suffering and death and to stabilize conditions in existing refugee areas; (2) The refugees will be temporarily relocated in camps to be established on lower ground in northern Iraq; and (3) The refugees will be repatriated to their homes in Iraq. The U. S. and its coalition partners will provide security to the refugees as they move from the mountains to the temporary camps and for an undetermined period at the camps. However, U. S. officials anticipate that UN and other relief agencies will increasingly assume responsibility for humanitarian assistance, with total responsibility in those agencies for such aid being accomplished within 30 to 45 days. It is also hoped that responsibility for such security as may be necessary can be

assumed by the international community.

8. UN officials reported that they were willing to coordinate the humanitarian relief efforts by UN agencies and other non-governmental organizations. However, they indicated that significant additional financial support would be necessary and that Iraqi consent, at least informally, would be necessary to operate in the camps established in northern Iraq by the coalition. Moreover, Prince Aga Kahn told the delegation that the UN could not provide security protection without further action and authorization by the UN Security Council.

9. Some government and relief agency representatives indicated that certain private organizations were having difficulty gaining clearance from the Turkish government to enter the country. The delegation received assurances from Turkish officials, including President Ozal, that Turkey would fully cooperate with all relief organizations. However, they did urge that relief efforts by the non-governmental organizations be better coordinated. The UNHCR has been designated as the coordinator of such efforts, and the Deputy Commissioner told the delegation that the UNHCR would be accelerating its coordination activities.

10. The costs associated with the relief and repatriation efforts are very uncertain at this time, but will be significant. The United States has drawn down approximately \$133 million in emergency funds, supplies and equipment during the first 19 days of the relief effort.

International appeals to address the emergency total approximately \$722 million. This includes \$400 million in United Nations appeals to address refugee assistance in the border areas for the first three months of the relief effort. Additionally, the UNHCR has issued an appeal for \$178 million for emergency health programs and assistance for people displaced in Iraq. The International Red Cross has issued an appeal for \$73 million and the International Red Crescent has issued an appeal for \$32 million.

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. The Iraqi refugee situation is a human crisis of major proportions requiring a prompt and significant response from the international community.

2. Although some have questioned the timing of the decision, the President was correct in authorizing the use of military forces to provide emergency relief. U. S. forces are engaged in an unprecedented and intensive life support mission. If they were not so engaged many more refugees would die. The military has done an extraordinary job under very difficult circumstances. In addition

to continuing air drops and deliveries, the delegation encourages expanded deployment of military forces on the ground in refugee areas to facilitate the delivery of emergency aid in an orderly and effective manner.

3. Responsibility for providing humanitarian relief should be assumed by traditional relief agencies as soon as possible. Among other things, this will require removal of the refugees from their remote mountainous locations, additional financial support from the international community for the relief agencies, a strong coordinating effort by the UNHCR, and the provision of credible security in Iraq for relief workers or a political arrangement with the Iraqi government that assures such security.

4. Many refugees will not come down from the mountains to temporary camps in lower lying areas in Iraq or return home without credible security guarantees. In the short term, such guarantees can be provided by the U. S. and coalition forces. However, this should not be a continuing responsibility, nor should the U. S. military constitute an occupying force in Iraq. The international community must endeavor to find a political resolution to this problem or assume responsibility on a multilateral basis for protecting the refugee population.

5. The costs of these activities are presently uncertain, but will be significant. They should be borne equitably by the international community. In providing emergency relief in the Turkish border area the United States has already expended \$133 million, including expenditures from existing accounts and \$100 million in Defense Department drawdown authority from inventory. At the very least, these funds and authority will have to be replenished and renewed. International organizations and relief agencies are also in need of support. For example, the UN and other international organizations have already issued appeals for about \$722 million, including relief efforts within Iraq and other border areas. It is likely that costs will ultimately be higher.

6. In view of the foregoing, it is clear that the Administration will have to submit to Congress at least one supplemental appropriations request. This should be done expeditiously given the gravity of the crisis and the need to accelerate the effort by the UN and other relief organizations. Congress should promptly consider such a request.

7. In view of the need to expedite inter-agency cooperation and action within the Executive branch, the President should consider appointing a high level person to coordinate U. S. responses to the immediate crisis,

**MEMBERS OF DELEGATION****Members of House of Representative**

Matthew Mc Hugh  
Tony P. Hall  
Howard L. Berman  
Marge Roukema  
Christopher H. Smith

Committee on Appropriations  
Select Committee on Hunger  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Select Committee on Hunger  
Committee on Foreign Affairs &  
Select Committee on Hunger

**Accompanying Staff:**

Terry R. Peel  
Martin S. Rendon  
Lise Hartman  
David Laufman  
Commander Paul Stanton  
Lt John Niehaus

Committee on Appropriations  
Select Committee on Hunger  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U. S. Navy  
U. S. Navy

APPENDIX I

U. S. COSTS TO DATE

AID Disaster Assistance	\$10,000,000
Emergency Refugee Assistance	\$10,000,000
PL 480	\$13,000,000
DOD Drawdown	\$75,000,000
Peacekeeping Drawdown	<u>\$25,000,000</u>
Total	\$133,000,000

APPENDIX II

INTERNATIONAL APPEALS FOR THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Refugees in bordering countries (UN)	\$400,000,000
Assistance within Iraq (UN)	\$178,000,000
Planning Phase	\$ 38,000,000
International Committee on Red Cross	\$ 74,000,000
Red Crescent Societies	<u>\$ 32,000,000</u>

Total	\$722,000,000
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# APPENDIX III

## ITINERARY

Friday, April 19

### Ankara, Turkey

Embassy Country Team Briefing

Ambassador Morton Abramowitz  
Mr. Michael Austrian, Political Officer  
Mr. Donald Krumm, Refugee Task Force  
Mr. Marc Grossman, Deputy Chief of Mission  
Dr. Phil Neiberg, Center For Disease Control

United Nations

Mr. Ed Cain, UN Development Program  
Mr. Dan Conway, Representative of UN High Commissioner on Refugees  
Dr. Claudio Sepulveda, UNICEF  
Dr. U. B. Tommasi, World Health Organization  
Mr. Kamil Raif, World Food Program

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ambassador Riza Turmen

Ambassador's Reception

Ambassador Eric Rouleau, French Embassy  
Ambassador Timothy Daunt, British Embassy  
Mr. Michael Lake, EC Representative  
Mr. Unal Somuncu, Red Crescent

Saturday April 20

### Diyarbakir

Brig. General Tony Zinn, Chief of Staff Combined Task Force  
Maj. General Bill Farnen, Commander Joint U. S. Military Mission For AID to Turkey  
Captain Goodin, British Air Force  
Tour of staging area

Silopi

Tour of staging area  
Overflight of Silopi Refugee  
Camp

Mountain Areas

Overflight of refugee  
settlements

Cukurca

Turkish Deputy Governor  
Suleyman Deniz

Cukurca Refugee Camp

Tour of camp

Divarbakir

Regional Governor Hayri  
Kozakcioglu

Incirlik Air Force Base

Lt General John Shalikashvili,  
Commander Combined Task Force  
Major General James Jamerson

Sunday April 21st

Incirlik Air Force Base

Tour of Rigging and supply  
activities

Briefing by the Multi-National  
Airlift Coordination Staff

Istanbul

President Turgut Ozal

Monday April 22nd

Geneva, Switzerland

Ambassador Morris Abram  
Country team briefing

Mr. Douglas Stafford, Deputy  
United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga,  
President of International  
Committee of the Red Cross

Dr. Brenda Gael McSweeney,  
Executive Co-ordinator,  
United Nations Volunteers

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan,  
Executive Delegate of the UN  
Secretary-General regarding  
humanitarian assistance  
related to Iraq

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Overflight of Silopi Refugee  
Camp

Mountain Areas

Overflight of refugee  
settlements

Cukurca

Turkish Deputy Governor  
Suleyman Deniz

Cukurca Refugee Camp

Tour of camp

Diwarbakir

Regional Governor Hayri  
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Executive Co-ordinator,  
United Nations Volunteers

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan,  
Executive Delegate of the UN  
Secretary-General regarding  
humanitarian assistance  
related to Iraq

**United States Senate**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY, 6:00 P.M., MAY 2, 1991  
(FOR FRIDAY AM'S)  
CONTACT: FRANK SIEVERTS, (202) 224-5220

**REPORT SAYS U.S. LOST OPPORTUNITY TO OUST SADDAM;  
URGES EXPANSION OF SAFE HAVEN TO PROTECT KURDS**

Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today released a staff study on the civil war in Iraq. The report says that only an expanded safe haven can accommodate all two million Kurds that are now refugees, and that foreign protection for the Kurds may have to continue indefinitely. The report says that the United States may have lost an opportunity to oust Saddam Hussein in March and faults an Administration policy of no contacts with the Iraqi opposition for the failure to anticipate the uprising and to respond effectively to it.

The report is prepared by Peter W. Galbraith of the Committee's professional staff. Over the Easter weekend, Galbraith travelled through Iraqi Kurdistan with the Kurdish rebels. As the Kurdish resistance collapsed, he narrowly escaped across the Tigris River to Syria. Galbraith has previously carried out Committee studies on Iraq's use of chemical weapons against the Kurds and on the Iran-Iraq war.

Attached is the staff study "Civil War in Iraq."

**CIVIL WAR IN IRAQ**

**A Staff Report  
to the Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
May 1, 1991**

## CONTENTS

Letter of Transmittal.....	iii
Summary of Key Findings.....	iv
I. Civil War.....	1
A. The Revolution Begins.....	1
B. The Kurdish Rebellion.....	3
C. Meanwhile in the South.....	6
D. The Collapse of the Kurdish Insurgency in the North..	7
II. The Humanitarian Crisis in the North.....	10
A. March 30-31, 1991.....	10
B. The Destruction of Kurdish Villages.....	11
C. The Concentration Camps.....	13
D. The Killing Machine.....	15
E. Effective Relief.....	16
III. United States Policy and the Lost Revolution.....	22
A. The "No Contacts" Policy.....	22
B. The Iraqi Opposition.....	24
C. An Opportunity Lost.....	27
D. The Relief Effort: Too Late for Too Many.....	29
IV. Prospects.....	32
A. The Kurdish-Iraqi Deal.....	32
B. Saddam Hussein's Future.....	34

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

May 1, 1991

The Honorable Claiborne Pell  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

At your direction, I have prepared and am transmitting a staff report on the future of Iraq. Over the Easter recess I travelled to the Middle East and to Iraq. I visited the coalition-held areas on the Iraq-Kuwait border, and travelled more than 150 miles through rebel-controlled Iraqi Kurdistan. Cities visited included Zakho, Dihok, and Amadiyah.

My visit to liberated Kurdistan, over the weekend of March 30-31, coincided with the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion and the beginning of the humanitarian catastrophe now overwhelming the Kurdish people. I was an eyewitness to many of the atrocities being committed by the Iraqi army, including the heavy shelling of cities, the use of phosphorous artillery shells, and the creation of tens of thousands of refugees. From Kurdish leaders and refugees I heard first-hand accounts of other horrors including mass executions and the leveling of large sections of Kurdish cities.

The Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani was my host in northern Iraq, and I also met with other leaders including Samy Abdul Rahman and the Assyrian Yacoub Yousif. In Damascus, Frankfurt, Paris, and Washington I met with other Iraqi opposition representatives including leaders of the religious and secular Shi'a parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Iraqi Communist Party, the Assyrian and Chaldean communities, and the Sunni Arab independents. I would like to express my appreciation to my Kurdish hosts and escorts who not only provided an opportunity to see first-hand the situation in liberated Kurdistan but who also protected me during a rapidly deteriorating military situation.

The views expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or any Members thereof.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Galbraith

iii.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### Humanitarian Issues

● Iraq's civil war has cost tens of thousands of lives in the Kurdish and Shi'a regions of the country, and has precipitated an immense humanitarian catastrophe. In northern and southern Iraq, forces loyal to Saddam Hussein have shelled cities intensely, have leveled neighborhoods, and have engaged in wholesale massacres of civilians. More than 2 million Iraqi Kurds have sought refuge on the Iraq-Turkey and the Iraq-Iran borders and they are dying at a rate of up to 2,000 a day.

● The safe havens created by U.S. and coalition forces around the northern Iraqi city of Zakho will draw thousands of Kurdish refugees out of the mountains. However, the Kurds are likely to remain in the Zakho vicinity only as long as foreign forces are there to protect them. Other refugees may not go to the safe havens because of uncertainty over the duration of international protection. The Kurds are at risk of slaughter as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, and so the foreign protection will need to continue indefinitely.

● The more than one million Kurds languishing in Iraqi resettlement areas are the invisible victims of Iraq's civil war and repression. The resettlement areas, euphemistically known as "victory cities" but really concentration camps, were set up to accommodate rural Kurds made homeless by the regime's program to destroy all the villages of Kurdistan. Mostly unemployed since their arrival in the settlements in the mid-1980's, these Kurds have had little food and no transport to facilitate an escape to the mountains. Prior to the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion, the plight of these concentration camp Kurds was precarious. After a month of possible starvation and retribution, the death toll in the resettlement areas could be very high.

● Only an expanded safe haven encompassing towns along Iraq's borders with Turkey and Iran can accommodate all 2 million Kurdish refugees. The large size of the zone required is one by-product of Iraq's policy of destroying the villages in Kurdistan. The current policy of permitting the Baghdad administration and police to remain in the safe haven risks U.S. and coalition involvement in the conflict between the Kurds and the Saddam Hussein regime. Such a result can be avoided, and law and order better preserved, if the Kurds are allowed to administer and police towns in the safe havens themselves.

## Policy Issues

- The United States was unprepared for the peace that followed the Gulf War. Although President Bush fueled the rebellion inside Iraq by calling on the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam Hussein, the Administration did not anticipate the uprising either in northern or southern Iraq. As a result, the United States may have lost an opportunity to overthrow Saddam Hussein in mid-March, and it was unprepared to cope with the humanitarian crisis that followed the brutal repression of the rebellion.

- The Administration's surprise at events inside Iraq is directly traceable to a policy of no contact with the Iraqi opposition. This policy, originally dictated in response to Iraqi and Turkish protests over a 1988 State Department meeting with a Kurdish leader, continued until the end of the Gulf War and even after Turkey initiated its own dialogue with the Iraqi Kurds.

- Perhaps as a result of not speaking with the Iraqi opposition, the Administration mischaracterized the goals of both the Shi'a rebels in southern Iraq and the Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq. This mischaracterization may have contributed to the decision not to assist the rebels at a time they had the possibility of ousting Saddam Hussein.

- As the anti-Saddam rebellion gained force in mid-March, several strategically located Iraqi military figures were in contact with the Joint Action Committee of the combined Iraqi opposition. According to opposition sources, these leaders looked for a signal that the United States supported the rebellion. Not only was no signal given, but the public snub of the Iraqi opposition combined with background statements that the Administration sought a military, not a popular alternative to Saddam Hussein, served to deter defections to the rebellion, thus helping to doom the anti-Saddam cause. The United States also failed to respond to a Saudi proposal to assist the rebels.

- In spite of clear warnings, the Administration responded too late to the humanitarian crisis precipitated by Iraq's civil war. Military efforts now underway are at last providing effective relief.

- Saddam Hussein has greatly strengthened his internal position in the two months since the end of Operation Desert Storm. While he no longer poses a military threat to the region, he continues to menace his own people. Therefore, unless the United States is prepared to abandon the Iraqi people, it will be involved in the Iraqi quagmire for a long time to come.

## I. CIVIL WAR

### A. The Revolution Begins

On February 27 at midnight E.S.T., President Bush halted Operation Desert Storm after 100 spectacularly successful hours of a ground campaign. American forces had not only liberated Kuwait but were in occupation of 15 percent of southern Iraq and located adjacent to such southern Iraqi cities as Basra, Nasiriyah, and Suq al-shuyukh

The Iraqi army was decimated. Of a pre-war size of 1,000,000, as many as 100,000 were dead. Most of its tanks, armor, and artillery had been either destroyed by coalition bombing, or abandoned and captured during the ground war. Ordinary Iraqi soldiers, like the people in towns under U.S. military control, viewed the Americans as liberators. This attitude, seen graphically in television images of defeated soldiers kissing the American victors, was combined with an intense hatred for the man who had inflicted so much misery in Iraq, Saddam Hussein.

On March 2, two days after President Bush halted the ground war, a surviving Iraqi tank driver in the southern city of Basra halted his tank before one of the 2-story high portraits of Saddam Hussein that hang everywhere in Iraqi cities. Through the portrait he fired a shell. This shell

ignited a spontaneous rebellion that raged, like a nearby Kuwaiti oil fire, through the Shi'a-dominated cities of southern Iraq.

Within days anti-Saddam rebels controlled most of the populated areas of southern Iraq. The rebels were a motley group comprising military defectors, outraged citizenry, and, later, some Shi'a clerics. From Iran to join the rebellion came Iraqi Shi'a who had long been refugees in the predominantly Arab southwestern corner of the Islamic Republic. These Iraqis brought with them pictures of Baqir Hakim, the son of the Shi'a spiritual leader Muhsin Hakim, and a man whose six brothers had been executed by Saddam. As a result, Baqir Hakim, from his exile in Iran, became the most visible person associated with the Shi'a uprising but he was neither its instigator, nor its leader, and it is unclear how many of the Shi'a rebels would have associated themselves with him.

Also from Iran in the early days of the Shi'a rebellion came elements of the Badr Brigade, an Iranian-trained force of exiled Iraqi Shi'a. Inside Iraq the Badr Brigade was a disaster. It organized (perhaps with some local rebels) the execution of surrendering and captured Iraqi army units. These executions promptly ended the surrenders and the defections.

As the Shi'a rebellion spread, the Iraqi regime pulled its forces out of northern Iraq to protect Baghdad and put down the rebellion in the south. This gave the Iraqi Kurds their chance.

B. The Kurdish Rebellion

Long suppressed by Sunni Arab regimes in Baghdad, Iraq's Kurds have almost invariably seized on weakness in the center as an opportunity for rebellion in the mountainous Kurdish areas of northern and eastern Iraq. Thus the Kurds took advantage of revolutionary confusion in Iraq in the 1960's and 1970's to rebel (a rebellion crushed after a U.S.-approved Iraq-Iran deal led to the cut-off of CIA assistance in 1975) and of the Iran-Iraq war to rebel in the 1980's. This time, however, the Kurdish leadership was more cautious.

The 1980's rebellion had been crushed with incredible ferocity. Beginning in 1985, the Iraqi regime had engaged in an accelerated program of destroying all the villages of Kurdistan. In March 1988 the regime used poison gas on the city of Halabja, and then in August launched a broad chemical weapons attack on more than 70 villages along the Iraq-Turkey and Iraq-Iran borders. With that rebellion taking the lives of more than 100,000 Kurds and costing another 2,000,000 their homes, the Kurdish leadership was reluctant to proceed without an assurance of success. To many in the Kurdish leadership the

calls made by President Bush for the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam Hussein and, in particular, the promise to shoot down Iraqi aircraft ("You fly, you die") provided such an assurance.

The spearhead of the Kurdish rebellion was not, however, the longtime leadership of the anti-Saddam Kurdish political parties. As in the south, there was a spontaneous popular uprising followed by the near simultaneous defection of some 300 officers of an all-Kurdish territorial military force. The defection of these officers and their units, locally known as the "jash" (or "mules") and long on the payroll of the Baghdad regime, effectively brought all the cities of Kurdistan under Kurdish control. It was only at this point that the two principal Kurdish leaders --- Massoud Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan --- emerged to take control of the rebel forces.

For a brief 2-week period at the end of March euphoria reigned in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds set up local administrations, restored basic services including electricity (Zakho in far north Iraq had electricity on Easter weekend; Baghdad did not), and prepared defenses. The Kurds inherited vast quantities of Iraqi military equipment including trucks, tanks, artillery, mortars, and light arms. They even captured an airfield with several Iraqi war planes.

For the first time the Kurdish population at large was exposed to the Kurdish insurgent movement and to the recent history of the movement. In the cities there were town meetings providing for give-and-take between Kurdish leaders and community leaders and professionals. Movie houses showed video footage of the Halabja poison gas attacks, including documentaries made by Western television networks. Kurds were able to visit the torture centers of the regime as well as the 15 or more extravagant palaces owned by Saddam Hussein in the Kurdish mountains. Ba'ath party headquarters were torched as were the local mukhabarat (secret police) offices. Abandoned army barracks were stripped of their tin roofs as well as other valuables.

The Kurds distributed weapons to every able-bodied man and claimed to have more than 400,000 men under arms. An observer could see that virtually every man in the Kurdish-controlled cities was armed but, as the Kurds discovered, an armed population does not an army make.

The Kurds also took large numbers of Iraqi prisoners. Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, estimated the total to be more than 100,000 but noted the Kurds could not hold these prisoners as they had no food or other means to take care of them. Interestingly the Kurds reported that their prisoners included more than 100 members of the Peoples Mojahideen, an anti-Khomeini Iranian group led by

Massoud Rajavi, that apparently was fighting with Saddam Hussein in Iraq's civil war.<sup>1</sup>

C. Meanwhile in the South

Kurdish euphoria proved short-lived. In the south, forces loyal to Saddam Hussein recaptured the main cities and engaged in a brutal campaign of repression. According to refugees, captured rebels typically were lined up, nooses strung from the lowered barrel of a tank gun were placed around their necks, and then the rebels were hanged as the gun barrel was raised. Shi'a holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala became abattoirs for the slaughter of rebels, clerics, and alleged sympathizers.

In addition to these activities, the Ba'ath regime apparently indulged its favorite pacification technique in the south. Whole neighborhoods were destroyed in March and early April, depriving urban rebels of sanctuary and punishing a hostile population.

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<sup>1</sup>The People's Mojahideen have sent a crude propaganda video to Members of Congress alleging that Iranian Revolutionary Guards, disguised as Kurds, launched a broad attack on northern Iraqi cities including Sulaymaniyah. In the video the People's Mojahideen boast of their role in defeating this supposed Iranian attack. In fact, Sulaymaniyah and other Kurdish cities were controlled by the Iraqi Kurds and any battle waged by the People's Mojahideen was on behalf of Saddam Hussein and against the Kurdish rebels.

The south's flat terrain, combined with the absence of experienced Shi'a guerrilla fighters, facilitated Saddam Hussein's repression of the southern revolt. The refugee flow out of the south -- approximately 40,000 to the U.S. zone and 70,000 to Iran -- did not compare to that which subsequently occurred in the north in part because the Iraqi army was able to surround cities and close off exit points prior to initiating the slaughter. The plight of Iraq's Shi'as, while far less visible than that of the Kurds, is certainly more severe than currently depicted.

D. The Collapse of the Kurdish Insurgency in the North

By March 28 the military tide was beginning to turn against the Kurds. Iraqi forces, backed up by helicopter gunships, launched a ferocious assault on the city of Kirkuk. As parts of the city were retaken, Kurdish insurgents reported that remaining residents of Kurdish neighborhoods were machinegunned and slaughtered. Within days Iraqi army forces moved into other Kurdish cities and towns: Dihok and Irbil fell on March 31, Zakho, and Sulaymaniyah on April 1.

Partly the Kurdish defeat is explainable by the ferocity of the Iraqi attack. Cities were subject to intense bombardment. Dihok, for example, was shelled incessantly the night before it fell. Phosphorous shells, which can instantly cremate their victims, were used extensively and with maximum

terror impact. Unlike the Iraqis, the Kurdish leaders were unwilling to subject their own people to this sort of devastation. Kurdish forces pulled out of cities not only because they believed they could not hold them over the long term, but also because they wanted to spare civilians and facilitate their flight to safety.

While the Kurds captured large quantities of Iraqi weapons, they were unable to make effective use of them. Artillery pieces were often idle for lack of firing pins. The Kurds had quite a collection of captured Soviet-made tanks (some disabled in the capture were restored by the Kurds) but did not necessarily have the ordnance to go with the tanks. All Kurdish military operations were hampered by a lack of gasoline and in some cases food for the guerrillas.

The Kurds also suffered from command and control deficiencies. Communication between commanders was often by written note and, when they had electronic communications, these were limited and not effectively utilized. Logistically, the Kurds had difficulty matching ordnance with weapons. The tank drivers would not necessarily know of a supply of ordnance stockpiled in a different part of Kurdistan.

From the cities of Kurdistan hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees fled to the high mountains along the Turkish and Iranian borders. The flight was not easy. After 8 months

of sanctions and 2 months of war, little gasoline remained in Kurdistan. Thus, most refugees travelled by foot. The vehicles seen heading out of Dihok, presumably typical of the flight from other cities, were heavily overloaded. Dump-trucks carried loads of fifty or more, private cars were filled and even carried adults and children in the trunks.

Not all the refugees were Kurds. Living among the Kurds in the north were more than 500,000 Christian Assyrians and Chaldeans. In Dihok, on Easter Sunday, Yacoub Yousif, an Assyrian leader, was eager to take his American visitor to the midnight service in an ancient Assyrian church, the first such service there since the Ba'ath regime had closed it years before. Heavy shelling of the city forced the priest to postpone the midnight mass to 2:00 a.m. and then, as the shelling continued unabated, to postpone to Easter morning.

Easter morning the last of the Dihok residents were moving out and the Easter service was not held. And a day which Kurds, Assyrians, and Chaldeans hoped might be part of their national resurrection instead marked the beginning of a new chapter of suffering and death.

## II. THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE NORTH

### A. March 30-31, 1991

As the Easter weekend concluded, it was clear an immense catastrophe was about to overtake the Kurdish people. People travelling to mountains on foot carried little food and not much with which to shelter themselves; adults shepherding children or assisting the elderly were able to bring even less. Those with cars and trucks were better off as they could carry more and arrived in the mountains less exhausted. However, even before the Kurds left their cities, little food was available. Typically a family group of ten finding refuge in the high mountains on the Iraqi side of the border arrived on Easter Sunday with a hundred pounds of rice and perhaps some other more perishable foodstuffs. It would be another 3 weeks before any significant international relief reached these people, and the Easter Sunday arrivals were the lucky refugees: they had come by truck or car.

Ultimately, some 800,000 Kurds actually reached the Turkish border while up to 1,500,000 are in Iran or along the Iranian border. The television images of these refugees -- desperate people living in filth, fighting for food, and burying their babies -- have shocked governments into action. Yet, they only represent part of the catastrophe.

Some unknown number of Kurds are still in the high mountains on the Iraq side of the Iraq-Turkey border, and perhaps on the Iraq side of the Iran-Iraq border. These are people camped out along the high Amadiyah-Zahko road, and on spur roads to the north. Almost certainly other refugees are camped along the road from Amadiyah to Rawanduz and in the mountains rising up to the Turkish border. These people are in areas where the Peshmerga, the Kurdish insurgents, operate, and of their plight little is now known except they are receiving no aid.

Another group invisible to the outside world but almost certainly in desperate condition are the residents of the so-called "victory cities," concentration camps created by the Saddam Hussein regime to house the villagers made homeless by the regime's depopulation program.

#### B. The Destruction of Kurdish Villages

Beginning in 1985 the Iraqi regime hit upon the ultimate solution to the persistent problem of Kurdish insurgencies: every village in Kurdistan was to be razed so as to deny the Peshmerga any base of support. During a 1987 trip through government-controlled Kurdistan, this author saw (and chronicled for the Foreign Relations Committee) the destruction process as it was underway. Along the principal highways in Kurdistan, villages and towns stood half destroyed. Sometimes

the houses on one side of the road stood vacant while on the other side there was nothing but rubble. The villagers were being relocated to what the Iraqi officials described as "victory cities," really concentration camps under the watchful eye of the Iraqi army, the police, and the Ba'ath party. In 1987, as seen from the highways, these concentration camps were just under construction, piles of cinderblock laid out in vast grid patterns.

Today there are no villages left in Kurdistan. Every village, including some that dated back almost to the beginning of civilization, has been dynamited and bulldozed into oblivion. Lost with the villages were schools, ancient churches and mosques, and a way of life for a proud, pastoral people.

Together with the villages, the Iraqi regime killed sheep and farm animals, and burned orchards. A particular target were the donkeys and few of these once ubiquitous beasts of burden can be found in Iraqi Kurdistan. The donkey, like the village, was a key support system for the Peshmerga.

By destroying rural Kurdistan, the Iraqi regime also deprived the inhabitants of this pastoral land of any indigenous food supply. As a result, the Kurds have become entirely dependent on imported food, and in particular, U.S. rice and wheat. With the U.N. sanctions, the American war, and

the civil war, these imported supplies disappeared. Kurds fleeing the cities at the end of March could find no food in the countryside and no village shelter in a still freezing mountain environment. The absence of indigenous food and shelter have greatly exacerbated the humanitarian crisis overtaking the Kurds.

C. The Concentration Camps

Perhaps as many as two million Kurds, Assyrians, and Chaldeans were moved from their villages after 1985. The luckier ones went to the cities to stay with relatives. There they were able to find employment or at least could live off the income of employed relatives. When the Kurdish military collapse came, these newly urbanized villagers, along with other city dwellers, had the food resources (often acquired at exorbitant blackmarket rates) and sometimes even the transport to flee.

Not so the inhabitants of the concentration camps, who number, according to Massoud Barzani, 1.1 million in 104 separate settlements. (This writer's independent estimate of the population was one million.) Mostly unemployed since the destruction of their villages, the concentration camp dwellers do not have the money to acquire food reserves.

In 1987 the Iraqi authorities would not permit a visit to the victory cities; in 1991 these concentration camps were liberated and thus accessible. They were also every bit as grim as they seemed from the highway four years ago. In a sprawling settlement of more than 10,000 near Zakho, a man was carrying grain treated with a vermin poison. To feed his family, the man intended to wash the poison off the grain. He said that several washings would be required.

In this particular concentration camp, there was just one well and it was highly polluted. Camp leaders said several children were dying each day of dysentery.

The plight of the 10,000 Kurds in this Zakho area victory city is emblematic of the one million or more concentration camp inhabitants. As of Easter Sunday, when catastrophe was just beginning to overtake other Iraqi Kurds, these people already had no food and their children were already dying.

The concentration camp inhabitants had no food resources to make possible an escape to Turkey or Iran and, unlike the city dwellers, there was no transport of any kind available to these people. Thus as the urban Kurds fled, the concentration camp people stayed behind.

The one million inhabitants of the concentration camps are the invisible victims of the Kurdish disaster. They are not

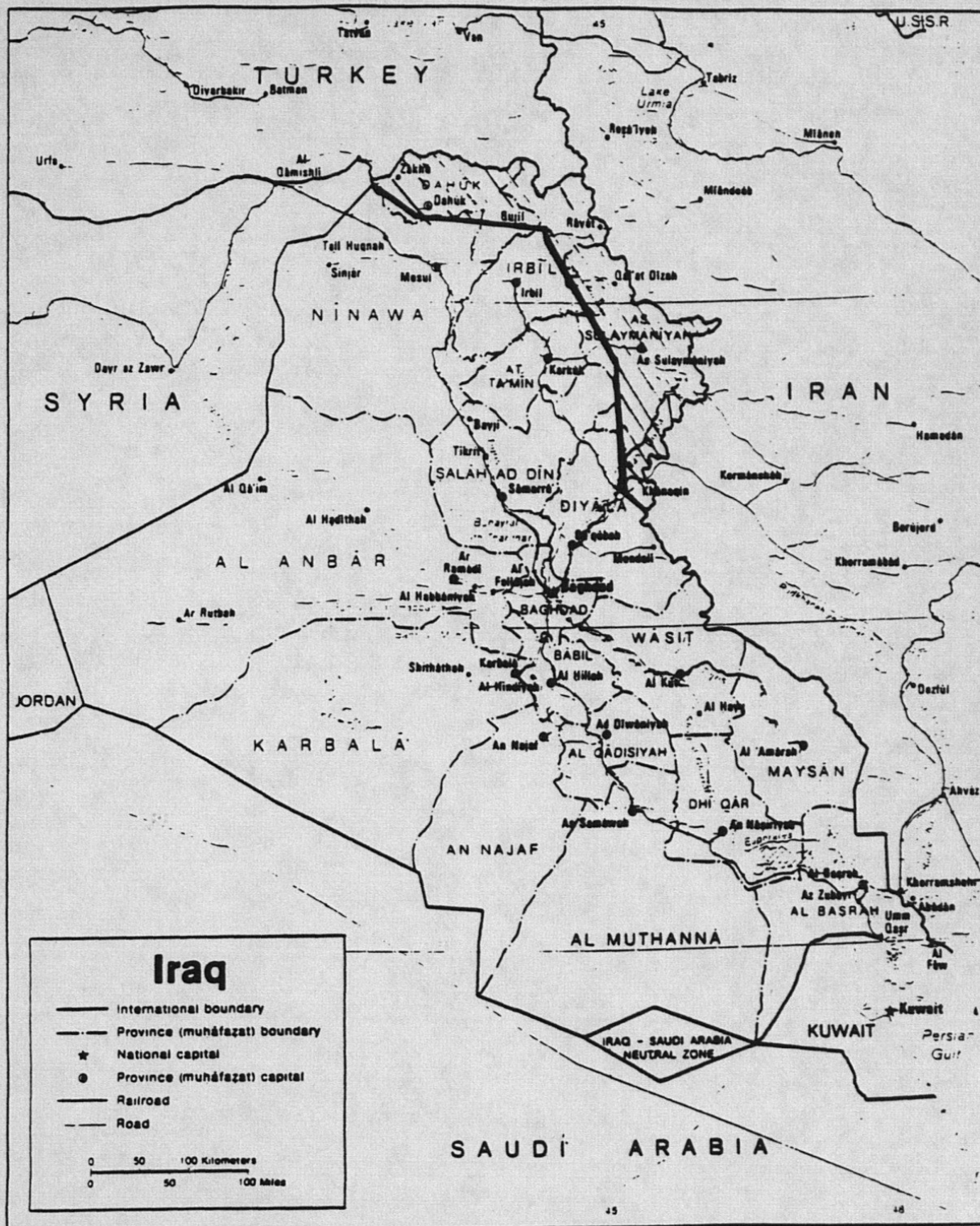
seen on television but their plight may be worse than that of the more visible refugees. These invisible Kurds have no food, no sanitation, and are at the mercy of a vindictive Iraqi army.

D. The Killing Machine

On August 25, 1988 -- five days after the end of the Iran-Iraq war -- the Iraqi air force launched massive chemical weapons attacks on Kurdish villages along the Iraq-Turkey border. The villages had been in areas where the Peshmerga operated, and because the Peshmerga had sided with Iran during the war, the area was marked for retribution.

But in seeking retribution the Iraqi regime did not attack the Peshmerga camps on the mountains above the villages, camps presumably quite visible from the air on the barren Kurdish hillsides. Rather, the regime targetted villages inhabited almost exclusively by women, children and non-combatant men. The terror impact of poison gas was thus maximized.

This history, and others like it, is well known to the people of Kurdistan. With the entire region under Kurdish control during the recent rebellion, entire urban populations feared a retribution aimed at maximizing civilian deaths. The actual experience of the March 1991 revolt -- the shelling of cities, the use of phosphorous and napalm, the killing of Kurds in recaptured neighborhoods -- seemed to justify these fears.



Proposed expanded safe haven

E. Effective Relief

The United States, the United Kingdom, and France are now creating safe havens in northern Iraq so that Kurdish refugees can return to areas where they can be sheltered, protected, and more readily fed. This plan is a variant on one proposed by British Prime Minister John Major. In its present form, however, it is questionable whether it will work.

The coalition has created a safe haven around the city of Zakho, ten miles from the Turkish border. The Iraqi army has been ordered out of a zone within a 30 kilometer radius of Zakho, and tent cities are being set up in a green valley along the Zakho-Amadiyah road. Many of the refugees in nearby Isikveren refugee camp are from Zakho, and the hope is that these people will return home. Kurds from other areas are to be accommodated in the tents. Supplies can be readily brought in from Turkey, and one of the two bridges that connect Zakho with Cizre in Turkey has been repaired. The road system is a good one, and as soon as bureaucratic impediments on the Turkish side are swept away, ample food and other supplies can be brought in. The safe haven now is in the process of being extended to the town of Amadiyah and vicinity, some 50 miles east of Zakho.

Many Kurds are now abandoning their miserable mountainside existence for the comforts of Zakho and its vicinity. As

things now stand, they are not likely to stay. Others will not come at all. The reason, quite simply, is the absence of sufficient guarantees for the safety of the Kurdish civilians.

Initially the Kurds were concerned that the army and the mukhabarat would continue to stay in Zakho under the guise of being ordinary police. They feared these professional killers could continue to murder even while the allies surrounded Zakho, or alternatively, that the mukhabarat would take names in anticipation of a coalition withdrawal.

The coalition resolved this fear by ordering all but 50 of the "police" out of Zakho and by insisting that the remaining police carry identity cards issued by the allies and wear arm bands. This solution, while probably adequate to allay short-term civilian fears, is part of a policy to leave the Iraqi power structure in place in the towns of the safe haven. It is a plan that risks embroiling the coalition in the very activity it seeks to avoid: the administration and policing of Iraqi towns.

The small Baghdad presence in the safe haven towns -- in Zakho the presence consists of the mayor, his administration, and the 50 police -- could well come under attack from angry Kurds. This would leave the coalition in the undesirable position of having to protect the Baghdad representatives, and

could draw the coalition into the quagmire of Iraq's Kurdish policies.

One alternative would have a large enough Iraqi administrative and police presence to maintain order. Of course, the refugees would not return home with such a presence.

A more workable alternative would leave the civil administration and policing of Kurdish towns and camps in the safe haven to the Kurds themselves. When the Kurds governed Zakho, Dihok, and Amadiyah, the law and order situation in these towns seemed very good. When not under Iraqi military attack, the atmosphere was far more relaxed than that of towns under Ba'ath regime administration and business seemed to be conducted almost as usual. Leaving the administration and policing of towns and camps in the protected zone to the Kurds and other local peoples would increase the confidence of the refugees and avoid coalition involvement in conflicts between the people and the Baghdad representatives.

The more serious impediment to the success of the safe haven plan is the unwillingness of the United States and its coalition partners to guarantee the physical safety of the civilian population for as long as the threat remains. The Bush Administration talks only of a short-term military presence in northern Iraq, and the suggestion is that after the

camps are established, they will be turned over to the United Nations.

A United Nations relief presence, not backed up by military force, is likely to leave most Kurdish refugees unpersuaded of the efficacy of the safe haven plan. Many are unlikely to return to Iraq under these circumstances, and those who do return are likely to go back to the mountains as the coalition forces withdraw.

The Kurds know Saddam Hussein and their fears are almost certainly justified. Without foreign military protection the Kurds face the risk of a renewed slaughter. The current discussion of a United Nations police force in northern Iraq may assuage legitimate Kurdish security concerns, but only if the mandate of the U.N. police extends to protection against the Iraqi police and army.

Two elements are essential to the success of any plan to persuade the Kurds to leave the mountains and to protect them if they do. First, the Kurds must be adequately protected from the Iraqi army and police as long as these elements pose a threat to Kurdish and other civilians. This threat will certainly continue as long as Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime are in power. Adequate protection for the Kurds will exist only if the Iraqi army and police are kept at a distance from Kurdish towns and camps, and if there is sufficient

military force between the Kurds and the Iraqis so that the Iraqis understand that any renewed attack on the Kurds will involve renewed hostilities with the United Nations or the coalition.

Second, any protected enclave for the Kurdish civilians must be sufficiently large to house the more than 2 million displaced Kurds, Assyrians, and Chaldeans. Zakho and the surrounding tent camps can accommodate between 200,000 and 300,000 or 2 to 3 times the area's normal population. To accommodate all the displaced Kurds with adequate shelter, water, and sanitation the protected zone will have to be extended. Currently it is being extended to Amadiyah. By extending the zone to cities and towns along the entire Iraq-Turkey border and the Iraq-Iran border to a depth of up to 50 miles, the entire Kurdish and other displaced peoples could be accommodated. Under this plan the safe haven protected by foreign military forces would include such towns as Zakho, Amadiyah, Dihok, Rawanduz, Shaqlawa, Sulaymaniyah, Khanaqin, and Halabja. The extension of the safe haven to so many towns is made necessary by the Baghdad regime's policy of having destroyed villages that might otherwise have accommodated such a large number of people in a more compact area.

The zone suggested here is the minimum needed to accommodate all the Kurdish refugees and yet does not contest Iraqi sovereignty over Kurdistan itself. Excluded from the

proposed zone are the politically critical cities of Mosul, Erbil, and Kirkuk. Within the zone, the Kurds should be permitted to rebuild their villages and to resume agricultural activities. This will ease the financial burden of providing for Iraq's Kurds as well as serving as a first step to righting a terrible wrong.

### III. UNITED STATES POLICY AND THE LOST REVOLUTION

#### A. The "No Contacts" Policy

The United States was unprepared for the peace that followed the Gulf War. It did not comprehend the depth of popular anger inside Iraq at Saddam Hussein and therefore did not anticipate the uprisings either in the south or the north. The Administration in its policy assessments seemed to mischaracterize the positions of the Kurdish and Shi'a rebels. As a result, an opportunity to overthrow Saddam Hussein in mid-March may have been lost. Further, neither anticipating the rebellion it had called for nor the brutal nature of the Iraqi response, the Administration was unprepared to cope with the subsequent humanitarian crisis. Being caught by surprise may be directly traceable to a policy of no-contact with the Iraqi opposition.

In April 1988, during a call at the State Department the Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani met with the Director for Northern Gulf Affairs, the Iraq desk officer, and the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights. (Talabani also met Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Claiborne Pell during the same visit). This meeting, of which Secretary Shultz was unaware, produced an explosive reaction from Iraq and Turkey. Secretary Shultz felt blindsided and an edict went forth mandating no contact with the Iraqi opposition. Subsequent developments --

Iraq's use of chemical weapons on the Kurds, an evolution of Turkey's policy towards a more generous view of its own Kurdish population, Iraqi violations of international law, and even the invasion of Kuwait -- did not change this policy. When Talabani came to the United States in August 1990, he met with Senators Pell and Kerry but was again cold-shouldered by the State Department.

After the war began on January 16, the Iraqi opposition approached the Administration with offers of military cooperation and of military intelligence. They were again spurned. Ultimately a channel to provide military intelligence was established by having information pass through the office of a Senate staffer. However, by the time this channel was established the war was nearly over.

On the day the war ended, a group of Iraqi Kurdish leaders were meeting in Washington at a conference held under the sponsorship of Chairman Pell in the Foreign Relations Committee hearing room. Both in the conference, in the side conversations, and at a private lunch hosted by the Committee, these leaders gave a detailed account of developments in Kurdistan, of the depth of the anti-Saddam (and pro-U.S.) sentiment, and of the likelihood of a mass uprising. Subsequent developments would not have surprised a participant attending these events. The Administration, which again

snubbed the opposition on March 1, was apparently unprepared for the uprising that began March 2.

B. The Iraqi Opposition

Iraq is a nation divided on confessional and ethnic grounds. Fifty-five percent of the population are Shi'a, 40 percent are Sunni, and 5 percent are Christian. Ethnically the division is 70 percent Arab, 25 percent Kurd, 5 percent Assyrian, Chaldean, and others. The Iraqi opposition is as diverse as the country itself. However, it has achieved a degree of coherence that its critics (especially those who do not talk to the opposition) never imagined.

The Iraqi opposition consists of Shi'a parties, Sunni Arab parties, Kurdish parties, and ideologically-based parties. The Shi'a parties include religious parties (the Dawa, or "Call" party, the Islamic Action party of the Ayatollah Mudarassi, and the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq of Baqir Hakim) and secular independents, of which the London-based leader Ahmad Chalabi is the most articulate spokesman. The Kurdish parties include the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The ideological parties, which are dominated by Sunni Arabs, include the Iraqi Communist Party and a dissident Ba'ath Party. The most prominent Sunni Arab

opposition figure is Damascus-based former Iraqi General Hassan Nequib.

In March these parties met in Beirut to forge an alliance and a common program. Brought together by a shared objective -- the removal of Saddam Hussein -- they achieved agreement on a broad program for a democratic and federal Iraq with very substantive provisions for Kurdish autonomy.

Strikingly, each of the parties in the Joint Action Committee -- the cumbersome name the opposition coalition arrogated to itself -- made tangible concessions in the interests of opposition unity. The Kurdish parties abandoned their dream of an independent Kurdistan, accepting that their rights can only be accommodated within Iraq. The Shi'a religious parties abandoned the idea of an Islamic state, recognizing the rights of religious minorities as well as those of the more secular Sunni Arabs and Kurds. The ideological parties accepted the idea of democracy in lieu of fascist or communist dictatorship.

The Beirut compromises reflect the reality of Iraqi politics. Based in the south and without a strong force in the army, the religious Shi'a could not hope to impose their will on all of Iraq. At a minimum they would need the assistance of the Kurds in the north who would hardly subscribe to a fundamentalist agenda. The Kurds could never rule Iraq by

themselves and likely could not obtain independence without either outside intervention or the acquiescence of the other Iraqis. The Arab Sunni opposition had the choice between Saddam Hussein (or a comparably repressive structure aimed at preserving the Sunni Arab monopoly of power) or a powersharing arrangement with the more populous Iraqi groups.

Meanwhile, official Washington continued to see the opposition in caricature. The Iraqi Shi'a were viewed as pawns of Iran seeking to impose a Khomeini-style regime, in spite of a very different history. Theologically the Iraqi Shi'a follow the Najaf school of religious thought; Najaf being a more modern and influential center of Shi'a learning than the Persian holy city of Qom. Politically, the Iraqi Shi'a never responded to Iranian calls for rebellion during the Iran-Iraq war. And, unlike the strong tradition of anti-U.S. sentiment among the Iranian clerics, the Iraqi Shi'a parties, including the Dawa and the Islamic Action, have been desperately seeking U.S. support and military involvement in the effort to liberate Iraq from Saddam Hussein. (There are also many fewer clerics in Iraq than Iran, Saddam Hussein having killed most of them.) All this was apparently never comprehended in Washington.

Similarly, the Iraqi Kurds have long made it clear that they recognize that an independent Kurdistan is not realistic. To his followers in Dihok, Jalal Talabani made much the same statement as he had to the Foreign Relations Committee: "It is

very difficult to change the borders of five countries. We are not for an independent Kurdistan; we are asking for our national rights within the framework of Iraq. I know of dreams and reality. All Kurds dream of an independent, unified Kurdistan, but we have to face the reality."

Nonetheless, Washington characterized him as seeking the break-up of Iraq and of being antagonistic to Turkey. Interestingly, after being snubbed by the State Department on February 28, 1991, ostensibly because a meeting would upset Turkey, Talabani left for Ankara for meetings requested by Turkish President Turgut Ozal.

#### C. An Opportunity Lost

As the anti-Saddam rebellion gained force in early March, several strategically located Iraqi military figures contacted the Joint Action Committee, according to both Arab and Kurdish opposition leaders. As the Iraqi military figures contemplated bringing possibly decisive force to the side of the rebels, they looked for a sign that the sponsors of the rebellion had the support of the United States, the one country preeminent militarily and politically in Iraq.

No such signal was given. On the contrary, the public snub of Kurdish and other Iraqi opposition leaders was read as a clear indication the United States did not want the popular

rebellion to succeed. This was confirmed by background statements from Administration officials that they were looking for a military, not a popular, alternative to Saddam Hussein. As one NSC aide put it on March 1, "Our policy is to get rid of Saddam Hussein, not his regime."

Any potential defector to the rebel cause put everything at risk: his position, his life, his family's lives, the lives of his relatives. Given the negative signals from Washington, the potential military defectors sat on the fence. And while they did so, the anti-Saddam rebellion was crushed.

Other countries in the region were eager to assist the forces battling Saddam Hussein. Syria was the country in the region most strongly supportive of the anti-Saddam rebels and provided significant support to Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurdish opposition groups. Parties from all three ethnic/confessional groups make their headquarters in Damascus.

During the time the Kurds controlled northern Iraq, Syria generously permitted access to liberated Kurdistan through its territory. Syrian officials responded enthusiastically to suggestions of assistance from coalition countries to the Iraqi opposition to oust Saddam Hussein. However, Syrian officials were reluctant to go too far alone and looked to the United States for leadership. None was forthcoming.

One reason suggested for U.S. reluctance to aid the anti-Saddam rebels was Saudi fears over the subversive impact of Shi'a or democratic success in Iraq. However, while the anti-Saddam rebellion was still underway, Saudi officials proposed that the United States and Saudi Arabia together militarily assist both Shi'a and Kurdish rebels. The Saudis indicated they had only recently developed contacts with the mainstream Iraqi opposition groups, but said they were prepared to support the Shi'a foes of Saddam as well as the Kurds. The Dawa party has sent Saudi Arabia a message assuring the Kingdom it has no intention of causing problems among the Shi'a in the strategically sensitive Eastern Province, and the Saudis expressly denied that concerns about the Shi'a would affect their plans to assist the rebellion.

According to the Saudis, the United States had not even responded to their proposal by the end of March. If a response came later, it was too late to tip the balance in favor of the rebels.

D. The Relief Effort: Too Late For Too Many

Not anticipating either the rebellion or the subsequent repression, the United States was unprepared for the humanitarian crisis that followed. Although clear warnings came from the U.S. Ambassador in Turkey just three days after the March 31 Kurdish collapse (along with warnings from

journalists and others escaping Iraq), U.S. Government disaster specialists were still performing assessments two weeks after the crisis began. So little is known about conditions inside Kurdistan that relief officials continue to refer to Kurdish villages even though villages have not existed in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1988. At a Congressional briefing on April 12, a senior U.S. Government official responsible for the relief effort praised the Iranian Red Lion and Sun Society for its fine relief effort, even though this society had dropped the Shah's Red Lion and Sun name and emblem in 1979 in favor of the Islamic Red Crescent.

The United States armed forces are now doing an extraordinary job delivering food and other assistance to the Kurdish refugees. Because of the terrain and limited road access to the mountains, the delivery of assistance is a logistical nightmare that is only being overcome by the ingenuity and dedication of U.S. servicemen and women.

However, it did take three weeks before these military operations were bringing adequate food to the Kurdish refugees on the Turkish border. Even now the mountain camps have inadequate sanitation and only limited water. Further, the much larger refugee population on the Iranian border has so far been excluded from U.S. assistance.

According to State Department estimates, Kurds are dying at a rate of 600 a day on the Turkish border. Another 1,000 or more may be dying on the Iranian border and, as always seems to be true with these megacatastrophes, the victims are the weakest of the community, the children and the aged. It is impossible not to conclude that this toll could have been much lower had the United States and other nations anticipated the uprising and its consequences. Instead, the Kurds were for too long a problem policymakers wished would go away.

#### IV. PROSPECTS

##### A. The Kurdish-Iraqi Deal

In the third week of April, a delegation of Kurdish leaders led by Jalal Talabani met in Baghdad with Saddam Hussein. They agreed to implement a 1970 pact providing for Kurdish autonomy. Previous efforts to implement this agreement foundered over arguments about the mixed Kurdish-Arab-Turkish city of Kirkuk (together with control of its oil revenues), and because Saddam Hussein has never been willing to relinquish his absolute control in Iraq. The current arrangement, agreed in principle but not yet signed, may yet fall apart over the details of autonomy or over Kurdish insistence on international guarantees for their autonomy.

The Kurds, more than anyone, know that Saddam Hussein cannot be trusted to honor any deal. The question arises then as to why their leaders even tentatively concluded such a deal.

Jalal Talabani foreshadowed such an arrangement when he told an American visitor in Dihok at the end of March (when the Kurds still controlled the city) that circumstance might force the Kurdish leadership to negotiate. At that time Baghdad was desperate for a truce and proposed to send Tariq Aziz, the former Foreign Minister, to Kurdistan to negotiate. Said

Talabani, "If we have hope for outside help we will never negotiate. If there is no hope we cannot refuse to negotiate."

With no help forthcoming and 2 million Kurds on the borders of Iraq, the Kurdish leadership faced a desperate situation. Saddam Hussein had already depopulated rural Kurdistan; without some accommodation providing for the return of the refugees, the Kurdish leaders feared he would complete the depopulation of Iraqi Kurdistan. Without Kurds any prospect for autonomy within Iraq would be moot. In addition, the Kurdish leaders were concerned about the physical wellbeing of their people stranded in difficult circumstances in the mountains. A deal, which was in the making prior to the U.S. decision to move into northern Iraq, seemed at the time to provide the only hope for saving lives.

Saddam Hussein also desperately needs peace in the north if his regime is to survive. As long as Kurds remain on Iraq's borders, international pressure on his regime continues. Further, without a deal, Baghdad faces a renewed guerrilla war at a time it needs to be devoting resources to reconstruction. A simmering civil war in the north could produce a flare-up of the Shi'a rebellion or could tempt an Iraqi general to seek peace by ousting Saddam.

These factors may auger for a successful deal over the short term. However, as Saddam's internal position is strengthened, and as international attention shifts from Iraq, there is every prospect that Saddam Hussein will renew his campaign against Kurdish civilians. Once the coalition has pulled out of Iraq, Saddam Hussein knows it is not likely to move back in. The Kurds understand this which is why many wish the coalition forces to remain in northern Iraq and why the Kurdish leadership seeks international guarantees for any autonomy deal.

#### B. Saddam Hussein's Future

The developments in the two months since the end of Operation Desert Storm have very much strengthened Saddam Hussein's position inside Iraq. He has defeated serious challenges in both the north and the south. The Kurdish autonomy deal threatens to split the unity of the Iraqi opposition as it was a sine qua non of the Beirut declaration setting up the Joint Action Committee that there be no separate deals between opposition groups and the regime. Worse, the price paid in blood by Kurdish and Shi'a civilians is almost certain to deter potential opponents and coup makers, unless there is a very strong likelihood for success.

In the immediate aftermath of Desert Storm, Iraq's army was dissolving and the regime's security apparatus was fading

away. Secret police went underground as did many Ba'ath officials. Few wanted to risk the retribution associated with a doomed regime. Now that Saddam has survived the crucible of civil war, his instruments of control -- the mukhabarat, the Ba'ath party, and the army -- are rallying around him.

Having lost the best opportunities for removing Saddam Hussein both during Operation Desert Storm and the March rebellion, it now appears the United States, the coalition, and the region will have to endure this dictator for some time to come.

Iraq is no longer a significant military threat to its neighbors or to the region. United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 will force Iraq to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction and will keep it from effectively rearming.

Saddam Hussein does, however, continue to menace his own people. Unless the world community is prepared to consign the Iraqi people to a fate which many have fought to avoid, the United States and its coalition partners are stuck in the Iraqi quagmire. Only the removal of Saddam Hussein and his regime can get us out, and the best hope for this result has passed. Saddam Hussein just turned 54 and could be around for years to come.

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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01. Notes	Handwritten Notes - Iraq Refugees (3 pp.)	n.d.	(b)(1), P-5	S

**Collection:**

**Record Group:** Bush Presidential Records  
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**Series:** Lampley, Virginia  
**Subseries:** Subject File  
**WHORM Cat.:**  
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<b>Date Closed:</b> 11/2/2007	<b>OA/ID Number:</b> CF01110-004
<b>FOIA/SYS Case #:</b> 1998-0099-F	<b>Appeal Case #:</b>
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*file Iraq Refugees.*

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 11, 1991

**FACT SHEET**

**I. EARLY REFUGEE RESPONSE AND PLANNING**

For refugees arriving in Jordan after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. contributed \$28 million in assistance. We actively participated in organizing international efforts to deal with the crisis, in particular the repatriation of third-country nationals.

Subsequently, the U.S. helped organize and contributed \$7.6 million to the UN preparations for 400,000 potential refugees. Pledges of \$38 million were collected, and four modules of refugee relief supplies for 100,000 refugees each were created in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and Iran.

**II. RELIEF EFFORTS IN OCCUPIED SOUTHERN IRAQ**

The U.S. has been providing humanitarian assistance in southern Iraq since 28 February. To date, CENTCOM forces have provided over 500,000 meals, one million gallons of water, have treated approximately 5,000 Iraqi patients, and have evacuated over 350 Iraqi civilians for treatment at U.S. or Saudi hospitals. In addition, U.S. forces drilled a well at Safwan for use by civilians that is producing 30,000 gallons of water a day. Moreover, Americans have only glimpsed the countless acts of kindness by U.S. soldiers providing food and water to Iraqi refugees.

On a daily basis, CENTCOM is providing:

- Inpatient medical care for about 150 Iraqis per day, with emphasis on pediatric care,
- Treatment for about 600 outpatients per day,
- Food sufficient for approximately 27-30,000 Iraqis per day,
- Materials to assist the Iraqis in building their own shelters,
- A refugee camp for 6,000 south of Safwan, and
- Protection for the Iraqi refugee population.

- more -

### III. RELIEF EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF IRAQI KURDS

The dramatic dimensions of the Kurdish refugee problem became apparent early in the first week of April. By April 4, alternative courses of action were being developed to provide massive assistance by airlift and the President made the decision to proceed early on April 5. The United States has mounted a serious effort to maximize international contributions to this effort.

The U.S. military was assigned the mission of providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in northern Iraq and southern Turkey to include food, water, shelter, and basic medical care until international relief agencies could assume this mission. The goal is to provide for the basic needs of 700,000 refugees for 30 days -- the equivalent of feeding, clothing, and sheltering a population greater than the city of Richmond, Virginia.

Operation Provide Comfort is the largest U.S. relief effort mounted in modern military history. It has, in less than one week, outstripped the massive airlift of relief shipments the U.S. sent to Soviet Armenia in December 1988. Harsh weather in the area and the lack of suitable navigation aids and the poor to nonexistent infrastructure of southeastern Turkey complicates this operation. Local road networks are poor, and therefore, the air drop option was determined the quickest response.

This extraordinary U.S. relief effort will proceed in four phases:

- Phase I - Immediate Relief. This phase started early on Sunday morning, April 7th, with six air drops of 72,000 lbs of emergency relief supplies. We anticipate that this phase will last until about 17 April. Immediate food relief supplies, as well as coats, tents, and blankets, are being provided during this phase along with medical advance party deployments and preparations for the larger sustainment effort.
- Phase II - Organized Sustained Effort. At the same time we are preparing to transition to a sustained effort. A buildup of intermediate support base and air/sea ports of debarkation, and establishment of forward support bases is taking place in Turkey. The U.S. Government is contracting for overland transportation and for bulk food supplies. The transition from the C-130 aircraft airdrop capacity to overland trucking support will greatly increase the flow of supplies.

- Phase III - Achieve Maximum Flow. We are planning for a relief effort that will provide one meal a day for 700,000 refugees. During this phase the U.S. military will maximize all of its available logistic and mobility assets to provide sustained, large volume resupply operations and to prepare to shift responsibility to international organizations when the U.S. military is withdrawn.
- Phase IV - Turnover. We hope by the end of this month to turn over to international relief organizations the logistics infrastructure for them to continue the relief effort.

So far, there have been 41 U.S. C-130 airdrop missions, which have provided the refugees 136 tons of MREs, 45,000 1.5 liter bottles of water, 35 tons of blankets, and 400 parachutes (used as tents).

Relief supplies en route to the refugees include 3,500 tons of bulk food to arrive Iskenderun on the USS San Diego (12 April) and the USNS SIRIUS (16 April). Containers/cargo will be off-loaded onto commercial trucks and transported to Incirlik for airdrop or carried directly to a humanitarian service support base for delivery to points along the border.

In addition, during the next five days, the following supplies will arrive in Turkey for airdrop or truck delivery to the refugees:

- 588,000 blankets
- 2,800 tents
- 80,000 field jackets

The United States is pushing forward relief supplies as fast as the logistics infrastructure will permit.

We have told the Iraqi Government not to interfere with these relief operations and, relatedly, not to fly either fixed wing or rotary aircraft north of the 36th parallel. Great Britain and France have joined in our forward airdrop effort and a growing number of countries are contributing to the airlift of relief supplies to Turkey.

The U.S. military, working closely with the Turkish Government and our own Agency for International Development and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, has from the outset of this terrible human tragedy, taken the lead in organizing and coordinating with other countries this unprecedented relief effort.

- 4 -

We will not abandon these refugees, and we will not allow Saddam Hussein to interfere with relief operations in the safe havens where they have sought or may seek refuge. Moreover, the President has directed that no effort be spared to help the refugees and has authorized all the resources necessary to sustain this commitment until international organizations can take over.

# # #

file Iraq  
Refugees.

Bob Howard  
meets  
18 April

April 18, 1991

Assistance to Iraqi Refugees and Displaced Persons

I. Magnitude of Problem

A. How many refugees?

JCS UN/state  
est. 350 - 900,000

1. Turkey/Iraq Border

450,000 Turkey 450,000 N. Iraq

2. Iran 1M

B. What is total (short term and longer term [UN] costs)?

Short Term Assistance

1. U.S. assistance to date

commitments

2. Assistance from other countries

announced \$260M  
30-40M short term

Longer Term Assistance

1. U.S. assistance to date

2. Assistance from other countries

\$230M pledges to UN  
operation for med term  
- does not include  
British/French  
security efforts  
or airlifts

C. <sup>U.N.</sup> Additional amounts that may be needed?

\$722M - 220/30 (allied contrib) = \$500M

II. Possible Sources of Additional Funding

A. What are the possible sources of additional funding for DOD operations?

B. What are the possible sources of additional funding for contributions to the UN programs? (see table)

III. Is Legislative Action Needed?

A. Can any unmet needs be covered by legislation or other methods that do not require new U.S. funding?

1. Defense Cooperation Account transfer authority

2. Use of Pakistan Economic Support Fund and Foreign Military Financing set asides

3. Use of Iraqi assets

4. Creation of an Iraq Cooperation Account financed by sale of Iraqi oil

B. What Congressionally-initiated bills are anticipated?

Attachment

Resources and Authorities Used/Currently Available without Congressional Action  
(\$ in millions)

Program	Authority	Amount Used	Amount Available	Resources Source
Drawdown of DOD goods/services	FAA Sec. 506(a)(2)	75 *	0	DOD military stocks.
Drawdown of any U.S. agency goods/services (State)	FAA Sec. 552(c)(2)	25 *	0	DOD military stocks.
Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account (State)	FAA Sec. 551; reprogramming	5.3 *	0	Unobligated balance in account.
Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA) account (State)	Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962	13 + 10 coming	16	Unobligated balance in account.
International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account (AID)	Transfer per FAA Sec. 492(b)	12.4	30	ESF transfer (e.g., \$100 million Pakistan).
PL 480 Title II food grants (AID)	Public Law 480 basic appropriation	12.8	36	Unobligated balance in account.
	Admin. transfer to Title II from other PL 480 Titles	0	89 (up to)	Unobligated balance in accounts.
DOD Emergency Airlift	Geneva Convention	12	Not quant.	Various DOD O&M accounts.
Peacekeeping Emergencies (AID)	Transfer of funds per FAA Sec. 552(c)(1)	0	15	Transfer from ESF (e.g., Pakistan).
Other Contingencies	Transfer per FAA Sec. 451	0	25	Transfer from ESF (e.g., Pakistan).
Exports from USDA food stocks	Agriculture Act of 1949 Sec. 416(b)	0	Not quant.	Unobligated balance in Commodity Credit Corporation.
Food Security Wheat Reserve	Public Law 480	0	125	Unobligated reserves.
UN Participation Act Emergency Assist. drawdown of DOD goods/services	UN Participation Act Section 7	0	Not quant.	DOD stocks and personnel.
Excess Defense Property Authority (non-lethal)		0	Uncertain.	Excess DOD stocks; unobligated balance DOD O&M accounts.
<b>TOTAL OF QUANTIFIED ITEMS</b>		<b>155.5</b>	<b>336.0</b>	

\* It is anticipated that the President will approve these transfers shortly -- Peacekeeping Operations, FAA Sec. 552(c)(2) and \$50 million FAA Sec. 506(a)(2).

(correct) Add DOD costs to move equip. + MRE's in South

+ 10.0

## Assistance to Iraqi Refugees and Displaced Persons

UN. Agency appeals 4 ICRC "National RC (Turkey & Iran)  
\$722m based on 1.5M people  
3 months from time they take over

US. ∴ has contributed a 15%↑ to above effort  
\$155m of \$722m

State believes for political reasons need to have  
add'l cash available for UN appeals but take  
credit for as much as possible already used ~  
\$77m (which is a 10% of total UN/US  
portion of 25%)

### State's original Supp pkg.

\$100m Refugees.

ERMA  
23m to replenish

plus \$77m for appeal U.N.

27 AOS office of assistance OFDA buying food supplies,  
funding PVOs

- [31 PL480] could drop this piece but if can move  
some PL480 around

25.5 UN/COM peacekeeper

\$152.5m

### DOD

Does not have handle on what costs really are  
what are Desert Storm US refugee costs.

concern is to have authority to do what they need to do

add'l authority beyond \$75m also what they've been  
dig into \$15B Desert Storm/Shield account. doing

{ \$15B only available for Defense costs.  
don't need new cash

State & OMB have real political (foreign) problems with dipping at all into DCA (foreign contributions only)

### State Bill

- Needs probably new money but would trigger a sequester.

- ① - alternative "declare emergency" but lots of other domestic emergencies would be dragged in: drought etc.
- ② - OMB: Pakistan ESF \$191M State: NO; Baker wants to hold till Jan or July.  
(108 grant balance low interest loan) opposed by state & defense

- ③ - Japanese \$9B \$8.738B they are saying they made commitment.  
- 1 does that lower their commitment supposedly Pres letter says no but improves optics.  
our argument is \$1.2B w/ Japanese.

Japanese asst.  
State/OMB: should be directed to U.N. effort.  
Japanese cannot contribute directly to U.S.

- ④ - DCA / Persian Gulf \$15B  
ERMA } cover  
OFDA }  
not add'l cash contributions to U.N.

May have to declare emergency anyway because authority for use directly related to Desert Storm

SFLC voted out Mayrnan Supplemental \$50M Disaster Assistance  
Today - has pay as you go, trigger a Dequestor

HFAE Thu AM

Appropriates returns Monday; appearing before HFAE.